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IN THE
MYSTIC REALM

FLASH GORDON

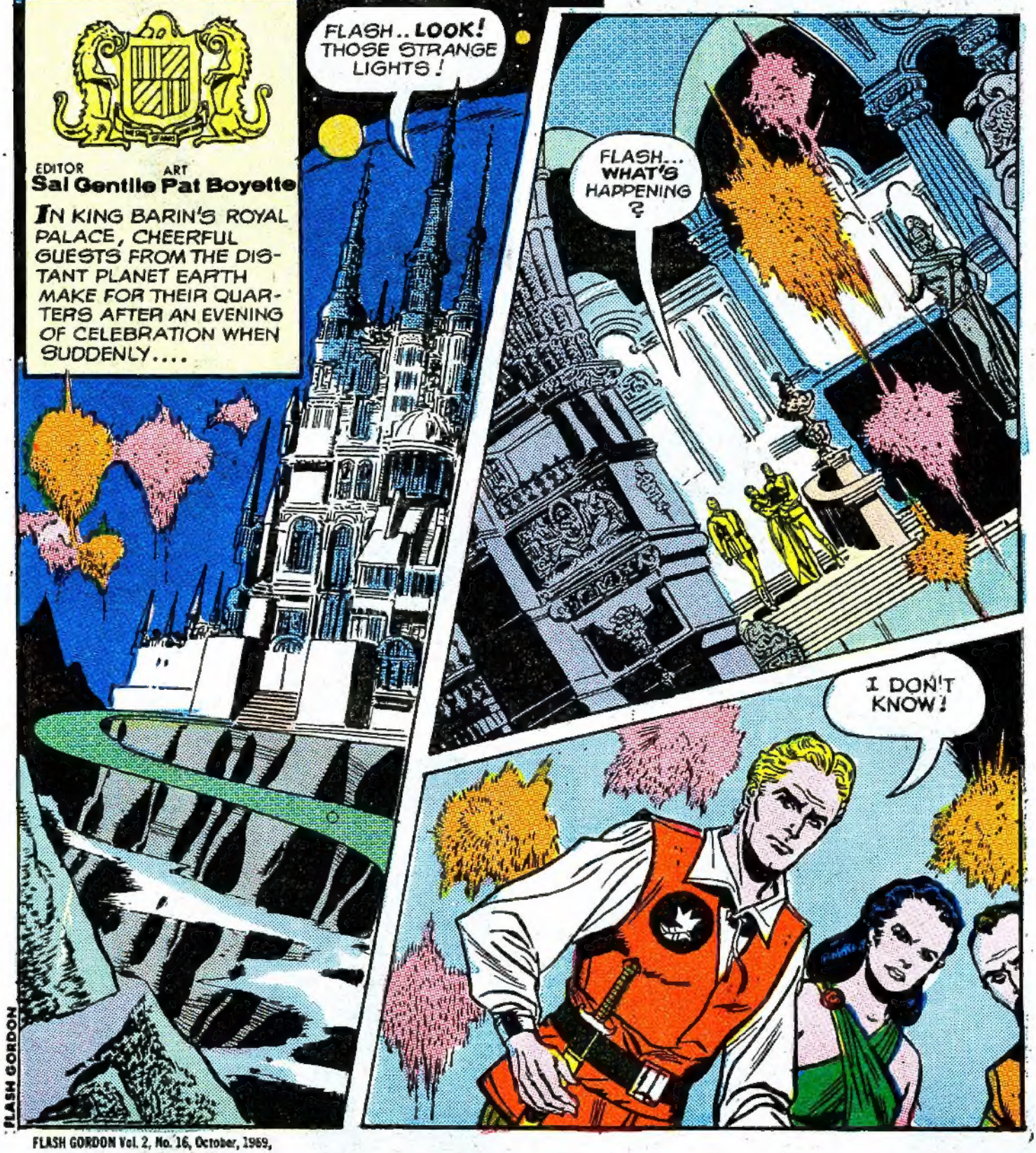
MISSION INTO THE MYSTIC REALM

G-349

EDITOR Sal Gentile

ART Pat Boyette

IN KING BARIN'S ROYAL PALACE, CHEERFUL GUESTS FROM THE DISTANT PLANET EARTH MAKE FOR THEIR QUARTERS AFTER AN EVENING OF CELEBRATION WHEN SUDDENLY....



FLASH GORDON

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THE LUMINOUS VAPORS EXPLODE IN A BLINDING FLASH - AND....
THERE'S THE ANSWER! DEMONS!
FLASH.. HELP!
AN UPHILL FIGHT WITH ONLY A DAGGER!
WE..CAN'T HOLD WITHOUT HELP, FLASH!
SO..I HOPED MY APPEARANCE WOULD BE IN TIME!
TAKE HEART... VALIANT MORTALS .. SILVIUS OF THE VALMIKI FIGHTS BESIDE YOU!
2

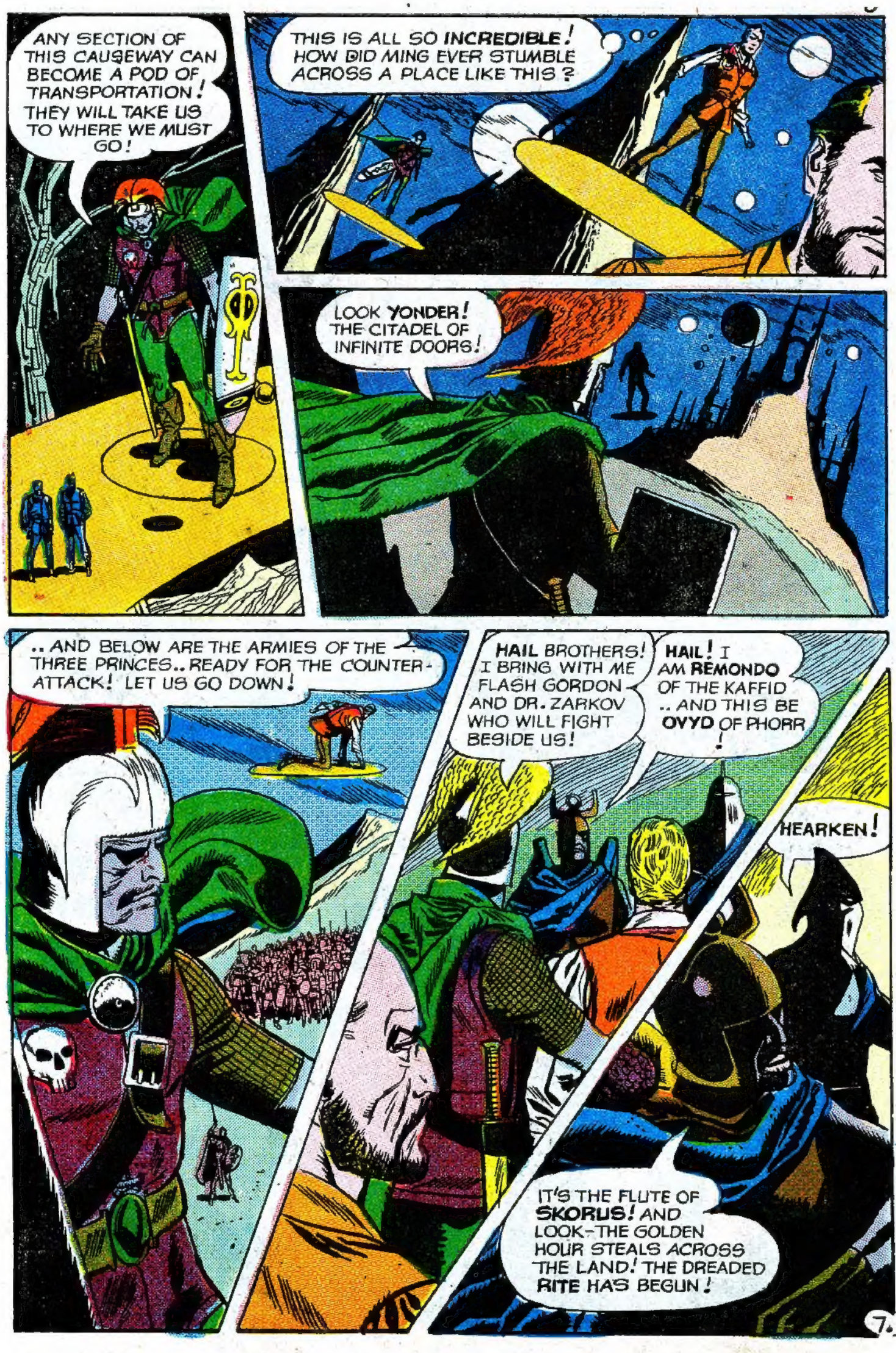
HAH! WHAT DEMON DARES TO DEFY MY GLORIOUS MACE?
HERE GALLANT ONE...TRY THE HEFT OF THIS WEAPON...
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE... BUT THANKS!
AGH
IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, MORTAL...LET NONE ESCAPE!
...I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE! THESE CREATURES DON'T MEAN TO RETREAT!

BUT THEN-SUDDENLY:
...THEY'RE VAPORIZING!
WE'VE WON!
OH, FLASH.. IS IT REALLY OVER?
WHAT HAPPENED HERE, SILVIUS.. AND.. WHO ARE YOU?
WOULD THAT WE MIGHT DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS IN DEEPEST SECRECY..BUT TIME FORBIDS THE LUXURY!
VERY WELL THEN-THIS IS THE STORY!
"I AM ONE OF THE THREE PRINCES OF OPHIR, WHOSE ETERNAL DUTY IT IS TO GUARD THE 'CITADEL OF THE INFINITE DOORS'- THE GREAT PASSAGEWAY BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS!"
"TARQUIN, THE DARK WIZARD, HAS MANAGED TO MAKE HIMSELF MASTER OF OUR WORLD...WITH THE MALEVOLENT AID OF THE ONE FROM YOUR SPHERE WHO CALLS HIMSELF...."
..MING THE MERCILESS!
WHAT?
4

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

MING AND TARQUIN COMMAND ALL THE HOSTS OF EVIL IN OPHIR! SUCCESSFULLY HAVE THEY CHALLENGED THE THREE PRINCES AND TAKEN THE CITADEL OF INFINITE DOORS!
NOW IT LIES WITHIN THEIR POWER TO PERFORM THE FORBIDDEN RITE OF THE BLACK COSMOS AND CALL FORTH... NJAA-KOR..THE MOST DREADED BEING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE!
THUS HAVE I USED MY ANCIENT SCIENCE TO BRING ME HERE-AND TO BEG YOUR AID IN THIS DESPERATE FIGHT AGAINST OUR COMMON FOE..!!
WE KNOW THIS MING DOES FEAR YOU ALONE OF ALL WHO LIVE!
"... ALL KNOWN FORCE IS UNAVAILING AGAINST THE POWER OF NJAA-KOR!"
HOW DO WE GET TO OPHIR, PRINCE SILVIUS?
IT COULD BE SOME KIND OF CRAZY TRAP ..BUT IF MING IS REALLY INVOLVED!
WAIT, FLASH! I'M GOING TOO!
SO AM I!
SIMPLY GRIP THESE RINGS!
5.

SORRY, DALE! I'D RISK ANYTHING TO SEE MING FINALLY DEFEATED..!! ANYTHING BUT YOU!
SILVIUS-?
FORM A CLOSED CHAIN -THEN WE NEED MERELY STEP INTO AN ETHEREAL ANGLE!
WHA..?
AND THUS - I WELCOME YOU TO OPHIR, MORTALS!
GREAT TAO!
6.


ANY SECTION OF THIS CAUSEWAY CAN BECOME A POD OF TRANSPORTATION! THEY WILL TAKE US TO WHERE WE MUST GO!
THIS IS ALL SO INCREDIBLE! HOW DID MING EVER STUMBLE ACROSS A PLACE LIKE THIS?
LOOK YONDER! THE CITADEL OF INFINITE DOORS!
.. AND BELOW ARE THE ARMIES OF THE THREE PRINCES.. READY FOR THE COUNTER-ATTACK! LET US GO DOWN!
HAIL BROTHERS! I BRING WITH ME FLASH GORDON AND DR. ZARKOV WHO WILL FIGHT BESIDE US!
HAIL! I AM REMONDO OF THE KAFFID .. AND THIS BE OVYD OF PHORR!
HEARKEN!
IT'S THE FLUTE OF SKORUS! AND LOOK-THE GOLDEN HOUR STEALS ACROSS THE LAND! THE DREADED RITE HAS BEGUN!

WE DARE DELAY NO LONGER! WARRIORS OF OPHIR....
ATTACK!
COME, FLASH GORDON! FIGHT BY MY SIDE!
STAND BY, ZARKOV! WE'LL HAVE GREATER NEED OF YOU LATER!
AND SO IT IS THAT, WITH A SUDDENESS TO WHICH ONLY THE TRAINED SENSE OF A SUPERB FIGHTER COULD ADJUST, FLASH FINDS HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF A FURIOUS ASSAULT!
BEHOLD..THE ENEMY COMES TO MEET US!
8.

LIKE THE CLASH OF TWO MONUMENTAL FLOOD TIDES THE INCREDIBLE HOSTS JOIN IN DEADLY COMBAT!
AGG
THIS IS NO PETTY FORCE MING HAS HERE! AND YET-HE'S ONLY USING THESE CREATURES..TO GAIN HIS REAL ENDS...
WE'RE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED!
AHHH

YOU ARE TRULY A WONDER, FLASH GORDON! BUT-THE MINIONS OF OUR ADVERSARIES ARE RELENTLESS!
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO BREAK THROUGH TO THE CITADEL ITSELF!
OTHERS AMONG THE OPHIREAN WARRIORS HAVE COME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION..
DEATH TO THE DARK WIZARD!
AND, SO RECKLESSLY DETERMINED IS THEIR ONSLAUGHT, THAT THE SEEMINGLY LIMITLESS HORDES OF BEAST-LIKE DEFENDERS ARE HURLED BACK TO THE VERY OUTER PRECINCTS OF THE EERIE STRONGHOLD!

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MEANWHILE:
HOW CAN IT BE? THEY'RE ALMOST UPON US!
SILENCE TARQUIN! LEAVE THE BATTLE TO ME! YOU GO ON WITH THE RITE OF THE BLACK COSMOS!
THE VALOR OF THE PRINCES OF OPHIR IS TRULY REMARKABLE! HOW UNFORTUNATE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SO FOOLISH AS TO WASTE AGAINST THE GENIUS OF MING THE MERCILESS!
GENERAL ZTA-YOU MAY NOW THROW YOUR LEGIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY'S FLANK! ARMED WITH MY OBLITERATING RAYS-THEY WILL SMASH ALL BEFORE THEM!
.. BUT THOSE MEN WERE MEANT TO GUARD JESSA, THE...
DO NOT INTERFERE WITH MY DESIGNS, TARQUIN ..I-AND I ALONE CAN ANNIHILATE ALL OPPOSITION!

AND, AS MING HAS PREDICTED, THE COURSE OF THE BITTER CONTEST CHANGES...
ALAS! THE FORCES OF EVIL ARE GREATER THAN WE SUSPECTED!
THEY'VE TAKEN US FROM BEHIND!
YIELD NOT! VICTORY OR DEATH!
NOW..ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO WATCH THE UTTER RUIN OF THE OAFS WHO DEFY ME!
FOR ALL THEIR SHINING COURAGE, THE WARRIORS OF THE THREE PRINCES SOON FIND THEMSELVES OVERWHELMED...

HEH, HEH, HEH..SO END ALL WHO WOULD PIT THEMSELVES AGAINST MY SUBLIME POWER!
MING - COME AWAY NOW! THE SILVER HOUR IS AT HAND! TIME FOR THE FINAL INCANTATIONS TO BE SUNG!
WAIT ..DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME?
NO... IT IS HE!! FLASH GORDON! HE STANDS BEYOND THESE VERY WALLS!
SEND YOUR PERSONAL BODYGUARD, TARQUIN... AT ONCE..BRING HIM HERE ALIVE.. AT ANY COST!
HOW DID I COME TO BE YOUR SERVANT? WAS OUR PACT NOT MADE ON EQUAL TERMS!?
YOU HAGGLING CLOD..HOW MANY EONS DID YOU LIE BENEATH THE FRIGID LAKE UNTIL I SOUGHT YOU OUT?
13.

... DO AS I COMMAND BEFORE I RETURN YOU TO THAT CAPTIVITY!
SOON, DARK SHADOWS CONVERGE ON FLASH AND..
FOR AN IMMEASURABLE SPAN, FLASH DESCENDS THROUGH A CHASM OF STYGIAN VOID.. AND...
UHH..OH MY HEAD! WHERE..?
WHERE? RIGHT WHERE YOU WANTED TO BE... WITHIN THE CITADEL OF INFINITE DOORS!
AND.. BEFORE YOU, TARQUIN THE DARK IS ABOUT TO CALL FORTH THE VERY ESSENCE OF POWER INCARNATE!

AND I..I WHO POSSESS THE DREADED BOOK OF KOR..I ALONE SHALL CONTROL THE VILE FIEND!
FEEL THE HEAT, GORDON? AND NOW-LOOK! HE COMES FOR HIS VICTIM..YOU! BEHOLD!

NJAA-KOR, THE UNSPEAKABLE!

END PART ONE!

PART 2 THE MONSTER AND THE MAID
EVEN AS FLASH IS ABOUT TO MEET HIS FATE IN THE GHASTLY FORM OF NJAA-KOR -SILVIUS CONTINUES THE BATTLE FOR ULTRA-COSMIC SUPREMACY....
THERE STANDS THE CASTLE OF TARQUIN, DR. ZARKOV!
..IF MY GUESS IS CORRECT, THE DARK ONE DID DRAIN HIS MANPOWER IN ATTACKING OUR ARMY FROM THE REAR! WE MAY STILL BREACH THE DEFENSES...
... AND FREE JESSA THE SERENE FROM THE BONDAGE HE AND MING HAVE PLACED UPON HER...!
ONLY SHE MAY YET BE ABLE TO HURL NJAA-KOR BACK INTO HIS FOUL ABYSS!
AHA! THE GUARDS HAVE SEEN US!
16

THOSE ARE WEAPONS OF MING, I'LL WAGER!
THEY'VE NO HEART FOR EQUAL COMBAT, COME ON LET'S FIND SERENE!
SCANT MINUTES LATER:
THERE! BEHOLD HOW THE FIENDS HAVE SOUGHT TO NULLIFY JESSA'S POWER!
CAREFUL, PRINCE SILVIUS! THIS SARCOPHAGUS MAY BE BOOBY-TRAPPED! LET ME HANDLE IT!
AS YOU WILL, NOBLE MORTAL! BUT, MAKE HASTE, I DO IMPLORE!

THE GENIUS OF DR. ZARKOV PREVAILS OVER THE CLEVER DEVICES, AND...
FREE, FREE AT LAST! BUT...I FEEL AN AURA OF HORRID MALIGNITY!
INDEED! NJAA-KOR NOW STALKS THE COSMOS!
QUICKLY..I MUST GET TO THE SACRED POOL!
NOW-LET SILENCE REIGN, WHILE I CONCENTRATE THE ENERGY OF MY BEING UPON THE SPELL OF BANISHMENT!
AFTER A HURRIED EXIT FROM TARQUIN'S CASTLE.!!
MEANWHILE:
HA, HA! NOW, GORDON - HERE'S THE FINAL VICTORY! MY VICTORY!
WHA..? ..THE THING DROPPED ME!
18.
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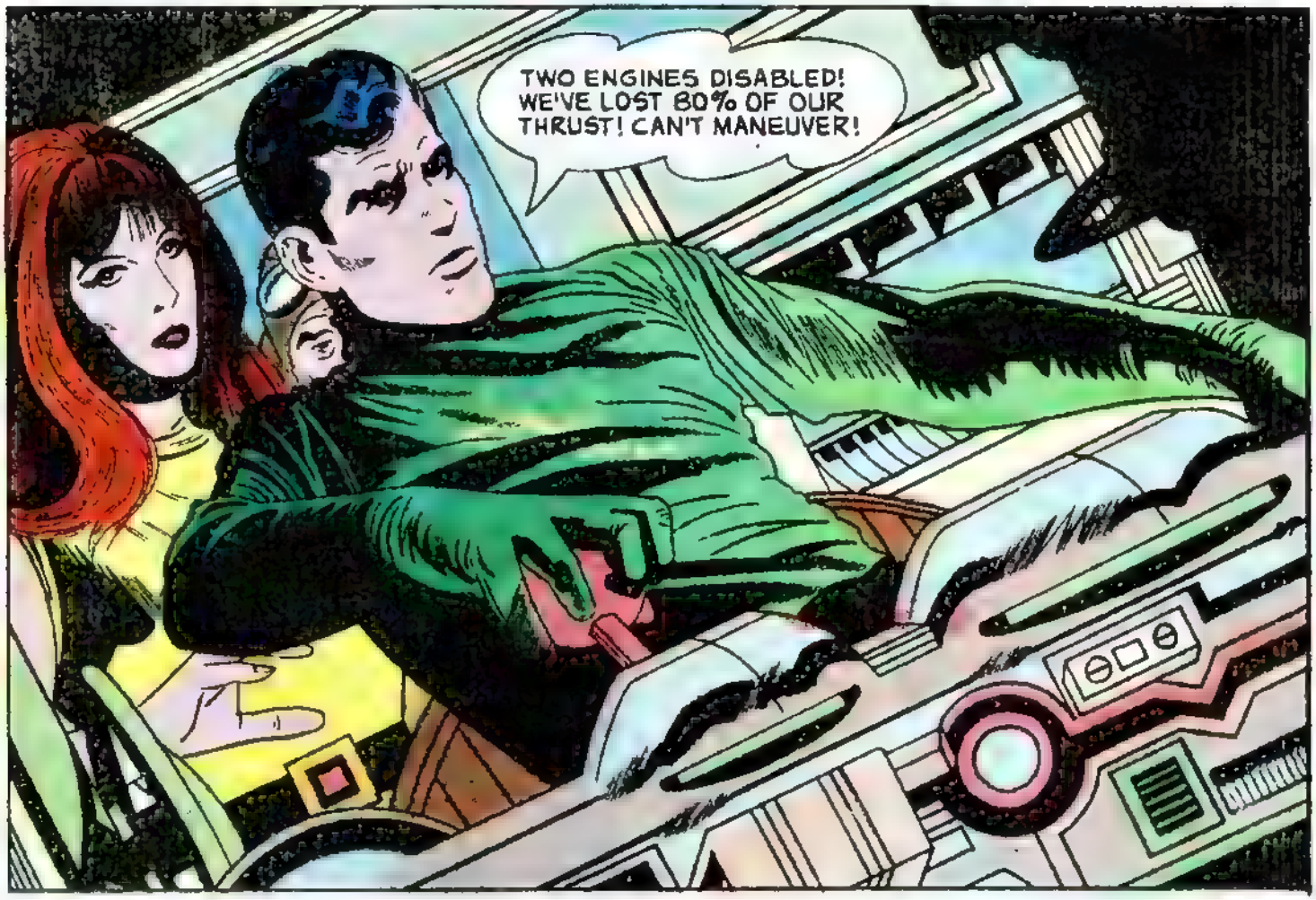
WHA..WHAT'S HAPPENING?
SOME POWER..INTERFERING ..TRYING TO FORCE NJAA-KOR BACK!
..IT CAN ONLY BE JESSA! I WARNED YOU AGAINST DRAWING AWAY HER GUARDS..
TRY? YOU SPINELESS DOLT ..IF YOU ALLOW NJAA-KOR TO BE DRIVEN FROM OUR GRASP.I'LL FLAY YOU ALIVE WITH MY OWN HAND!
I..CAN... TRY...
SHE MUST NOT DO SO! COMBAT HER! USE EVERY MYSTIC WEAPON AT YOUR COMMAND!
CRACK
...MY CHANCE!
THEY'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME! THIS IS...

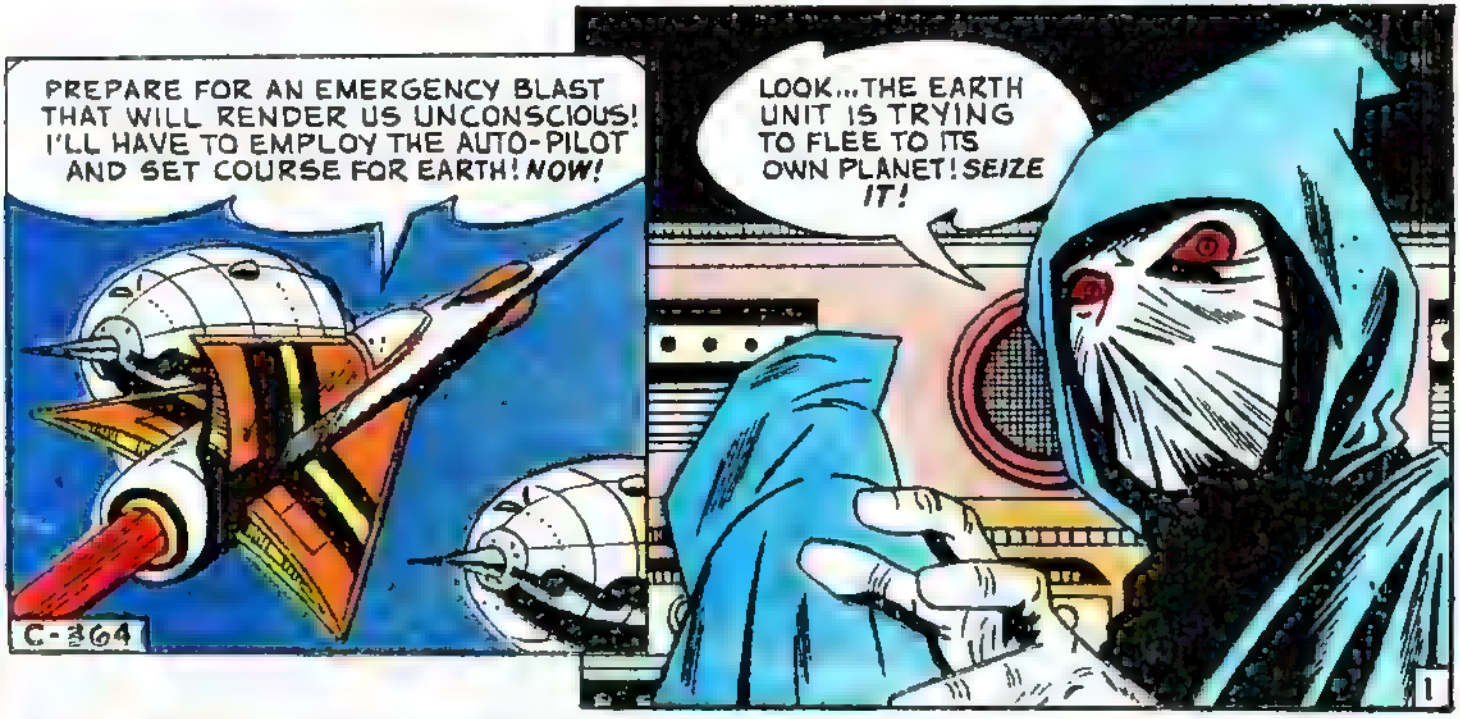
SWINE! I'LL NOT PERMIT YOU TO STOP ME NOW!
KA
I'M STRONGER THAN EVER, GORDON!
..NO.. DON'T TOUCH THAT BOOK!
THAT'S THE BOOK OF KOR!
THEN IT'S A THING OF EVIL.. AND MUST BE...
DESTROYED!
NO!

YOU'VE STOLEN CONTROL OF NJAA-KOR.. BUT IT WILL BE YOUR LAST ACT!
AT THAT MOMENT, JESSA TAKES CONTROL OF THE MONSTER.. AND..
NO! NOOO...
OBEY ME, NJAA-KOR... SEIZE MING!
..THEY... THEY'RE DISAPPEARING!
NOW.. YOU BOTH WILL RETURN TO.. NETHER DARKNESS!
DONE!
JESSA! SHE'S LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS, ZARKOV!
MAKE A SOFT BED FOR HER, PRINCE SILVIUS! LET HER REST LONG AND WELL!
SHE'S JUST RID THE UNIVERSE OF THE TWO MOST LOATHSOME FIENDS IT HAS EVER KNOWN!
THE END

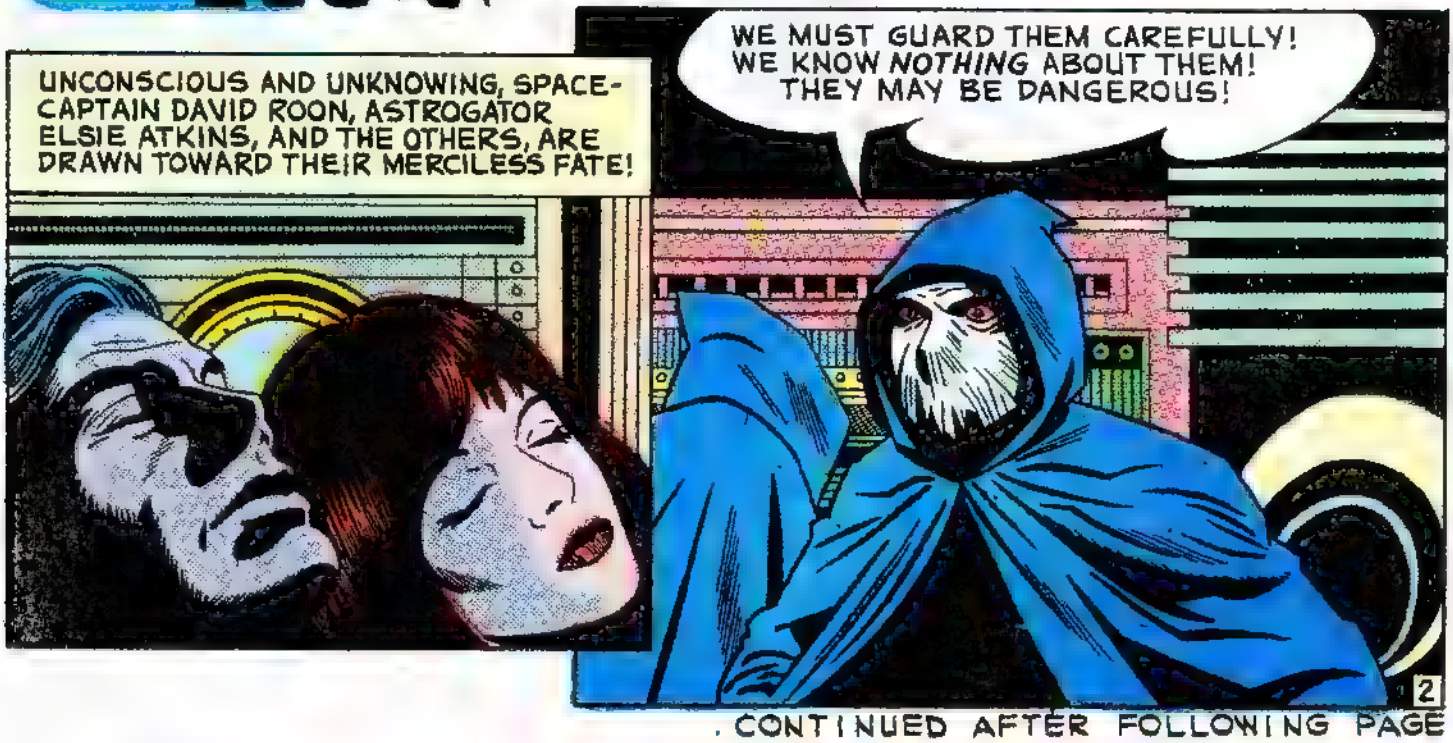
THE REAL ENEMY

AFTER A CENTURY OF EXPLORING SPACE, CONTACT WAS AT LAST MADE WITH ANOTHER WORLD... INHABITED BY A MANLIKE SPECIES... WITH OTHER MANLIKE CHARACTERISTICS ...SUCH AS SETTLING DISPUTES BY VIOLENT MEANS! THAT IS WHY SPACE-CAPTAIN DAVID ROON'S CRUISER IS AT THIS MOMENT TRYING TO DESTROY THE ENEMY FLEET ...AND WHY THE ENEMY SHIPS' WEAPONS ARE TEARING AT HIS CRAFT!




PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY BLAST THAT WILL RENDER US UNCONSCIOUS! I'LL HAVE TO EMPLOY THE AUTO-PILOT AND SET COURSE FOR EARTH! NOW!
C-364
LOOK...THE EARTH UNIT IS TRYING TO FLEE TO ITS OWN PLANET! SEIZE IT!
1

ONCE WE HAVE EXAMINED THE EARTH CREATURES, WE WILL KNOW THE BEST METHOD OF OBLITERATING EVERY ONE OF THEM! *INSTANT EXTINCTION IS OUR GOAL!*


UNCONSCIOUS AND UNKNOWING, SPACE-CAPTAIN DAVID ROON, ASTROGATOR ELSIE ATKINS, AND THE OTHERS, ARE DRAWN TOWARD THEIR MERCILESS FATE!
WE MUST GUARD THEM CAREFULLY! WE KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT THEM! THEY MAY BE DANGEROUS!
2

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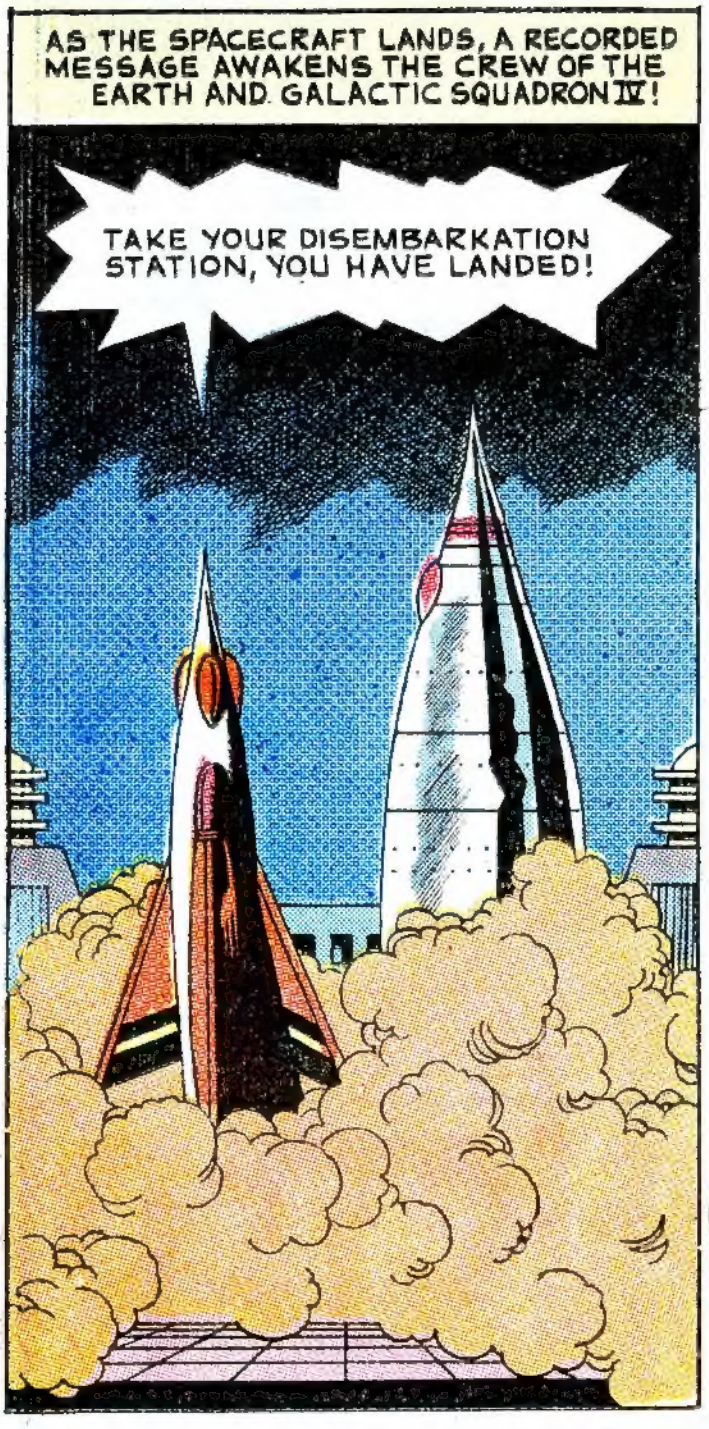
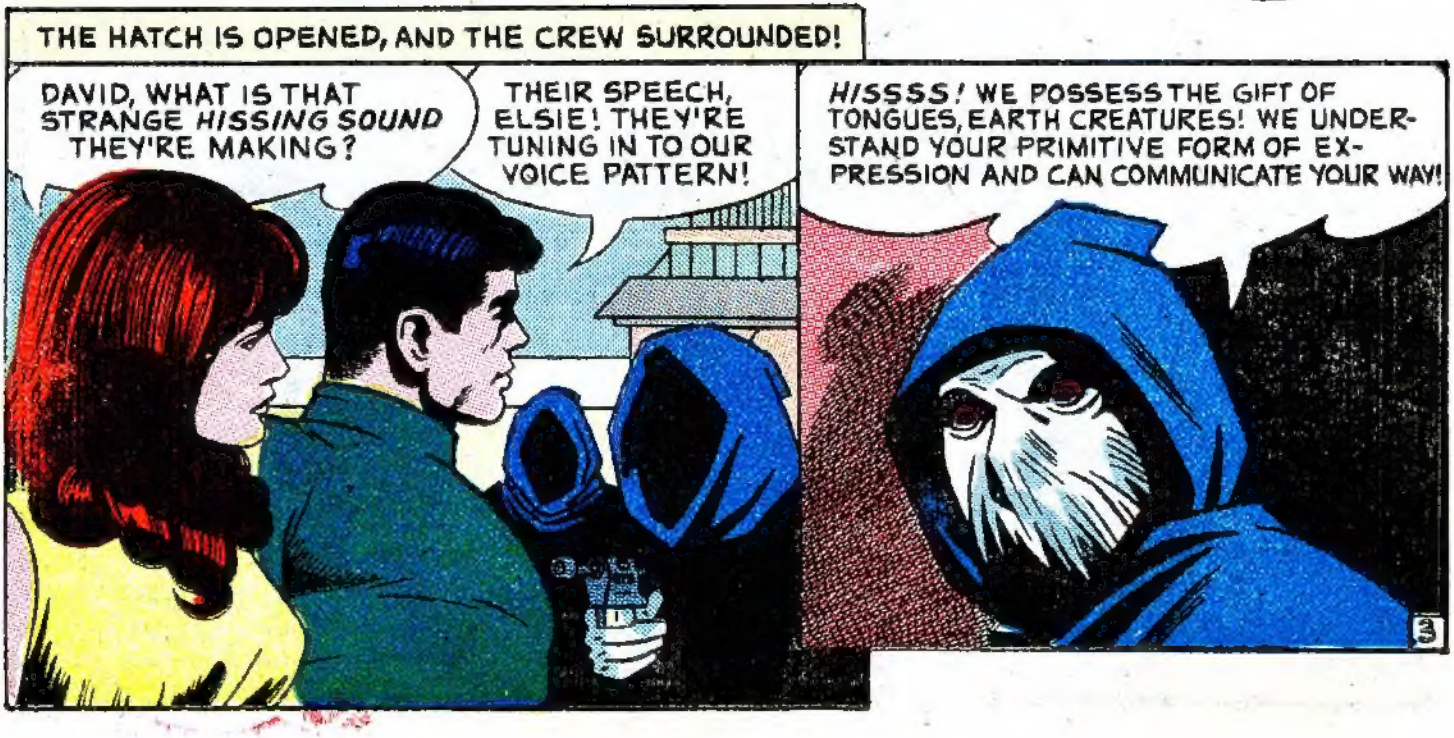
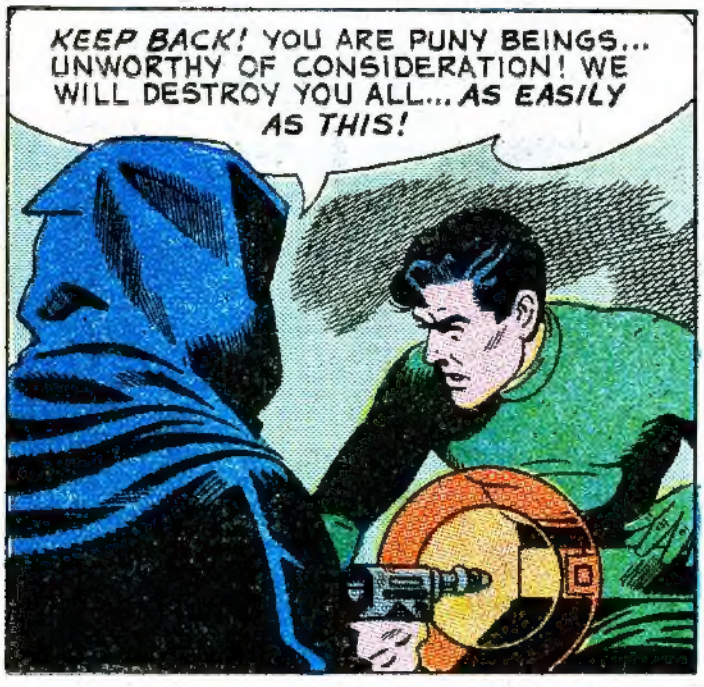

AS THE SPACECRAFT LANDS, A RECORDED MESSAGE AWAKENS THE CREW OF THE EARTH AND GALACTIC SQUADRON IV!
TAKE YOUR DISEMBARKATION STATION, YOU HAVE LANDED!

ARE WE AT THE SPACEPORT, CAPTAIN ROON?
GOOD GRIEF! GET READY FOR A SHOCK, ELSIE! WE'VE GOT TROUBLES!

WHAT IS IT, DAVID? WHAT'S WRONG?
THEY'VE CAPTURED US... WE'RE ON KYNOSS!


THE HATCH IS OPENED, AND THE CREW SURROUNDED!
DAVID, WHAT IS THAT STRANGE HISSING SOUND THEY'RE MAKING?
THEIR SPEECH, ELSIE! THEY'RE TUNING IN TO OUR VOICE PATTERN!
HISSSS! WE POSSESS THE GIFT OF TONGUES, EARTH CREATURES! WE UNDERSTAND YOUR PRIMITIVE FORM OF EXPRESSION AND CAN COMMUNICATE YOUR WAY!
3

GOOD...NOW WE CAN TALK OF PEACE! YOUR SHIP ATTACKED US WITHOUT REASON! NOW... PUT DOWN THAT GUN!


KEEP BACK! YOU ARE PUNY BEINGS... UNWORTHY OF CONSIDERATION! WE WILL DESTROY YOU ALL... AS EASILY AS THIS!

DON'T YOU DARE HARM HIM AGAIN, OR I'LL... AH... AH... AHHHH-CHOOO! DARN IT... I'VE CAUGHT A COLD!

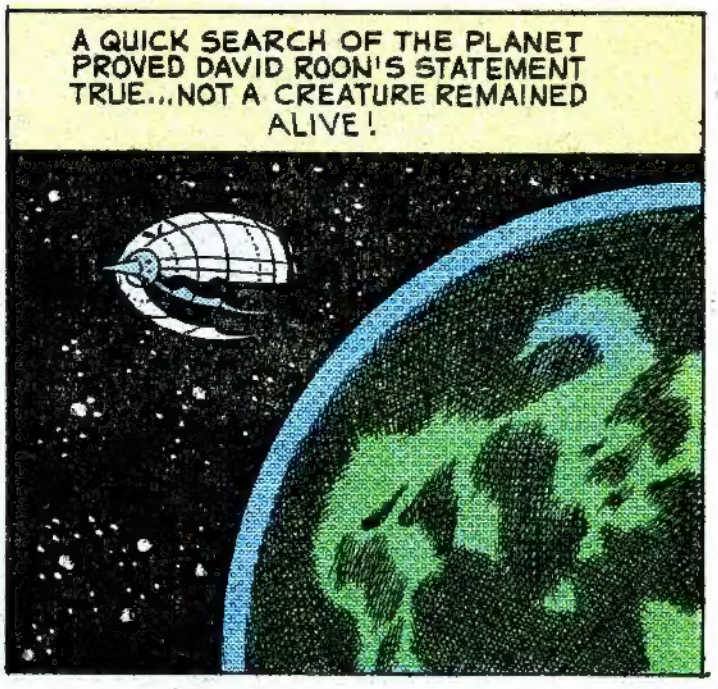
THE NEAREST 'THING' TO THE SNEEZING GIRL COLLAPSES, AS TINY INFECTED DROPLETS REACH HIM... AND A SECOND IMMEDIATELY BEGINS TO GO DOWN!

DO THAT AGAIN, ELSIE! THAT'S THE ANSWER! KEEP SNEEZING!
WHAT'S MY SNEEZING GOT TO DO WITH... AH... AH... AHHHH-CHOOO!

SPACE-CAPTAIN ROON LEAPS FOR ONE OF THE ENEMY, AND DISARMS HIM!
OUR SPACE SHIP IS WRECKED... WE'VE GOT TO SEE IF WE CAN OPERATE THEIRS! C'MON!

I THINK WE CAN DO IT! NOW, LET'S CHECK ON THE *VIRAL INFECTION* ON THIS PLANET!
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, DAVID!

I THINK WE'LL FIND THAT THERE WAS NEVER ANY BACTERIA OR VIRUS ON THIS PLANET UNTIL WE ARRIVED! WITHOUT ANY *RESISTANCE WHATSOEVER*, THE KYNOSS CREATURES DIED!


A QUICK SEARCH OF THE PLANET PROVED DAVID ROON'S STATEMENT TRUE... NOT A CREATURE REMAINED ALIVE!

YOU DID IT, DARLING ... YOUR RUNNY-NOSED SNEEZE WIPED OUT A WAR-LIKE WORLD!
BE CAREFUL ... I'M A DEADLY WEAPON!
5

WHO CARES?
PAIII
END

DEATH DEFIER IN MINE MENACE

My full name is John Allen Wallington. In reports my three initials are used: J.A.W. But in the various countries in the world that use my services, I am known as "Death Defier." For wherever there is a challenge to justice or a danger that threatens innocent people, there I go. I care not if I have to be on the burning sands of the desert, the freezing snows of the artic, the highest mountain in the world, or through unknown jungle areas. All that counts is that innocent people must be saved. And often the challenger is Death himself!

That particular week I had been invited by the governor of one of our states, that had many coal mines, to discuss matters with Dr. Theodore Karsen, head of the Mine Bureau.

"We are doing our best to check on the mines to see that they have all the modern safety devices," said the director to me. "But we are always up against the unexpected. And then when there is a cave-in or explosion, we have to work against time to rescue the trapped miners. I do hope you have enough time so that we can show you what we are doing in some of those mines."

No sooner had he finished that last statement, then the phone on his desk rang. I heard only his conversation and watched his face turn white.

"There has been an explosion at the Merlington Coal Mine," he said to me. "Three men are trapped below. One is the son of the owner of the mine and two newspaper men who were with him. They were preparing material for a series of articles on coal mining. The mine is sixty miles from here. I will alert our special Mine Rescue Squad. Please come with us and see what you can do."

With a police escort we really flew along the highway on our wheels. We got to this mining town and I could see the smoke in the air thickening. "Coming from the burning mine," is what my thoughts were. "I hope I can help."

The first to greet us was Mr. Thomas Daley, owner of the mine. "You must rescue my son and those men with him," he pleaded. "I don't care if you have to destroy the mine, but save them."

One thing was fairly certain. You couldn't send a resuce team down until the flames had subsided. They were drilling a hole above ground to send down an air line. The danger was that when you pumped down the oxygen through the line, you had the danger of feeding the fire.

"Give me a map of the mine area and show me the shaft where the men are," I said. "Then I will know what to do."

I studied the map and took another look at the mine entrance. Smoke was coming out. And a few flames could be seen.

"I will tell you exactly what I am going to do," I said to Dr. Theodore Karsen. "I will wear an asbestos-flame suit. With an oxygen tank on my back. You will then give me three other suits like mine. I will carry this with me. Also a pick to see if I have to force my way through any area."

"But you can't carry all that material," he objected. "And it will be death for you to go now."

"If I don't go now, then it will be death for those trapped men," I pointed out. "And you can't send any men with me. They will die."

"That is true," he admitted. "But we will never know why you can live through situations where others die."

A half hour later, I was walking slowly through the mine. Going deeper and deeper. There was smoke all around me. Twice I almost fell down an open shaft. And then I finally came to where the men were. I had to push the debris aside to get to them. I removed my helmet and explained what was to be done.

"He is injured," said Mr. Walter Daley, son of the mine owner, to me. "We will have to put the suit on him."

This we did and slowly we began our return journey. The smoke thickened. And more and more, you could see the flames gathering strength as though they wanted to devour us. The heat was getting intense and could be felt through our protective suits. We reached the mine entrance and willing hands guided us away. And none too soon. For we heard a tremendous explosion and saw the mine entrance collapse. The crowd surely did cheer. And again, I am certain, Death felt I had cheated him out of three victims."